

**From:** [Gray, David](#)  
**To:** [USEPA](#)  
**Subject:** RE: NEWS RELEASE: EPA/TCEQ: Updated status of systems affected by Harvey  
**Date:** Thursday, September 14, 2017 6:10:00 PM

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**From:** USEPA [mailto:[vela.austin@epa.gov](mailto:vela.austin@epa.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 14, 2017 6:08 PM  
**To:** Gray, David <[gray.david@epa.gov](mailto:gray.david@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** NEWS RELEASE: EPA/TCEQ: Updated status of systems affected by Harvey



### EPA/TCEQ: Updated status of systems affected by Harvey

Working together, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality continue to coordinate with local, state and federal officials to address the human health and environmental impacts of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, especially the water systems in the affected areas. The TCEQ has approximately 500 people and EPA has 263 people assisting in response to this natural disaster.

As part of this coordination, a Unified Command was established between the EPA, the TCEQ, the General Land Office, and the U.S. Coast Guard to oversee all emergency response efforts. This Unified Command is supported by three operational branches in Corpus Christi, Houston, and Port Arthur. In addition to the EPA, the TCEQ, the GLO, and the USCG, multiple agencies and groups are supporting each of the operational branches, including the Texas National Guard, 6th Civil Support Team; the Arkansas National Guard, 61st Civil Support Team; the Oklahoma Task Force 1; and the Texas State Guard Engineering Group. Branch personnel are working to continuously monitor water and wastewater systems, as well as assess spills or discharges as a result of the storm.

As of **Thursday Sept 14**, the following information is available:

**Drinking Water:** To date, about 2,238 drinking water systems have been affected by Harvey. Of those: 2,014 systems are fully operational, 77 have boil-water notices, and 19 are shut down. Both the EPA and the TCEQ are contacting remaining systems to gather updated information of their status. Assistance teams are in the field working directly with system operators to expedite getting systems back to operational status.

**Wastewater and Sewage:** The TCEQ has made contact with 1,219 wastewater treatment plants in the 58 counties within the Governor's Disaster Declaration. Of those, 31 are inoperable in the affected counties. The agencies are aware that releases of wastewater from sanitary sewers are occurring as a result of the historic flooding and are actively working to monitor facilities that have reported spills. Additionally, the agencies are conducting outreach and providing technical guidance to all other wastewater facilities in flood-impacted areas. Assistance teams will continue to be deployed to work directly with system operators to expedite getting systems back to operational status.

On September 12, EPA approved the Texas Water Development Board proposed approaches to utilized State Revolving Funds from EPA to address immediate recovery and future resiliency efforts in Texas.

**Flood Water:** Water quality sampling will be focused on industrial facilities and hazardous waste sites. Floodwaters contain many hazards, including bacteria and other contaminants. Precautions should be taken by anyone involved in cleanup activities or any others who may be exposed to flood waters. These precautions include heeding all warnings from local and state authorities regarding safety advisories. In addition to the drowning hazards of wading, swimming, or driving in swift floodwaters, these waters can carry large objects that are not always readily visible that can cause injuries to those in the water. Other potential hazards include downed power lines and possible injuries inflicted by animals displaced by the floodwaters.

**Critical Water Infrastructure:** The TCEQ has made contact with the owners of the 340 dams in the impacted areas. There are 15 dams that have reported some type of damage. There have been no reports of downstream damage or loss of life. The TCEQ will be meeting with affected dam owners in the next week.

**Additional EPA/TCEQ updates include:**

**Superfund Sites:** The EPA and the TCEQ continue to get updates about the status of specific sites from the parties responsible for ongoing cleanup of the sites. The TCEQ has completed the assessment of all 17 state Superfund sites in the affected area. There were no major issues noted. The TCEQ will continue to monitor sites to ensure no further action is needed in regards to the storm.

The EPA completed site assessments at all 43 Superfund sites affected by the storm. Of these sites, two (San Jacinto Waste Pits and U.S. Oil Recovery) require additional assessment efforts. Underwater inspections by the EPA Dive Team at the San Jacinto Waste Pits site started this week and are continuing. No final determinations have been made by the Dive Team and their assessment is on-going. Repairs are underway on armored layer of the cap continue. The security cameras have not been restored and repairs are on-going. Yesterday, an EPA On-scene coordinator conducted an inspection of Vince Bayou to follow up on a rumor that material was offsite and did not find any evidence of a black oily discharge or material from the U.S. Oil Recovery site. The responsible party has been directed to sample the water standing in the open tanks and remove the excess storm waters. The responsible party has conducted operations to remove the excess water, and ensure that all materials in the former wastewater treatment tanks is secured.

The EPA or responsible parties have completed sampling the 34 Superfund sites in Texas and will finish sampling the 9 site in Louisiana

tomorrow. Post-hurricane Superfund site summaries based on preliminary data results are being released.

**Debris Management:** The TCEQ, supported by EPA, launched a social media blitz to encourage the separation of debris today. The TCEQ has approved 118 Temporary Debris Management Sites in areas under the Federal or State Disaster Declaration designations. TCEQ regional offices and local authorities are actively overseeing the siting and implementation of debris and waste management plans in the affected area. EPA, TCEQ and Army Corps of Engineer field observers are visiting staging and landfills to ensure compliance with guidelines. View a map of all Temporary Debris Management Sites.

**Reconnaissance/Orphan Containers:** The TCEQ continues to lead in monitoring facilities that have reported spills. Orphan containers, which include drums and tanks, found floating in or washed up near waterways continue to be gathered, sorted and grouped by type, prior to shipping them off for safe, proper treatment and disposal. Reconnaissance and assessment of facilities and vessels are being conducted to identify any leaks or spills and responded to accordingly. The Unified Command is also working to ensure the disposal of oil and hazardous materials is conducted properly. Response personnel operating out of Corpus Christi are expected to complete their work this week.

**Air Quality Monitoring:** One of the many preparations for Hurricane Harvey included the EPA, the TCEQ, and other monitoring entities temporarily shutting down several air monitoring stations from the greater Houston, Corpus Christi, and Beaumont areas to protect valuable equipment from storm damage. Since then, state and local authorities have been working to get the systems up and running again as soon as possible. As of Monday, Sept. 11, the TCEQ's air monitoring network is operational 100 percent in Corpus Christi, 96 percent in Houston, and 86 percent in Beaumont. The TCEQ is working to get the complete network fully operational as soon as possible and we will notify the public when the 3 remaining monitors are online. Of the available air monitoring data collected from Aug. 24 through Sept. 14, all measured concentrations were well below levels of health concern. The EPA conducted air monitoring using the TAGA mobile air monitoring bus in southeast Houston neighborhoods nearest industrial sources and data reports for September 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13 are available online at [www.epa.gov/hurricane-harvey](http://www.epa.gov/hurricane-harvey). EPA has concluded that the probable source of benzene and volatile organic compound readings in the Manchester community in Houston was the roof failure and spill from a light crude storage tank at the Valero Houston Refinery during Hurricane Harvey. EPA investigation into Valero Houston Refinery response and cleanup activities will continue.

Today, TAGA mobile air monitoring bus began monitoring air quality around three additional industrial sources near Deer Park, Texas.

EPA also sent its aerial surveillance aircraft to conduct a screening level assessment to evaluate unreported or undetected releases from facilities with Risk Management and/or Response Plans within the hurricane impacted areas. EPA's plane instrumentation measured 13 chemicals. The Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft found no exceedances of the Texas comparison values. The screening level results from ASPECT were compared to the ASPECT list of the TCEQ's short-term Air Monitoring Comparison Values and found no exceedances of the short-term AMCVs.

**Refineries/Fuel Waivers:** EPA approved the request from the State of Texas to continue to waive requirements for fuels in Texas through the end of the month to help address the emergency circumstances in Texas from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

For additional information please visit the: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/hurricanes>

View the EPA Story Map about Hurricane Harvey Response activities: [https://response.epa.gov/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=12353](https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=12353)



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